



Epi Update for Friday, October 5, 2018
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's EPI Update include:

- **Legionellosis: Cases on the rise, testing options**
- **CDC Fungal Awareness Week**
- **In the news: Health officials “very worried” as African swine fever spreads in Europe and Asia**
- **In the news: Walmart is going to use blockchain to stop the spread of *E. coli* and other diseases in lettuce**
- **Infographic: Protect yourself from itchy rashes**
- **Meeting announcements and training opportunities**

Legionellosis: Cases on the rise, testing options

Iowa has seen an increase in reported legionellosis (Legionnaire's disease) cases. There have been 48 cases so far this year, which is 71 percent higher than the four-year annual average for the same time period (28 cases). Legionellosis cases have been steadily [increasing nationally](#) and the exact cause is unclear. Potential contributing factors include increased testing, awareness, environmental exposures or patient susceptibility. Legionellosis cases tend to increase in the late summer and early fall, and known risk factors include age over 50 years, smoking, chronic lung disease or other underlying illness, travel with overnight stays in hotels or healthcare facilities, and exposure to hot tubs. Local public health and IDPH work together to interview all persons with reported legionellosis to identify possible shared exposure locations or other risk factors. IDPH also works closely with the CDC and other state health departments when exposures outside of Iowa are identified.

The recommended tests for diagnosing legionellosis are BOTH a culture of a lower respiratory specimen on selective media AND the *Legionella* urine antigen test. While the urine antigen test can produce a quick result, it does not detect all *Legionella* species and serogroups. Cultures can detect multiple species and serogroups and allow comparison of clinical and environmental specimens to identify possible sources of infection. Specimens sent to SHL for *Legionella* culture can also be tested by PCR, which has a quicker turnaround time than culture. Contact SHL at 319-335-4500 for more information if you are interested in submitting a specimen for culture and/or PCR.

For more information about *Legionella* from IDPH, visit wiki.idph.iowa.gov/epimanual/Home/CategoryID/91.

For more information about *Legionella* from CDC, visit www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html



CDC Fungal Disease Awareness Week

October 1 through 5 has been designated as Fungal Disease Awareness Week. Fungal organisms are an important cause of infections that can often go undiagnosed, leading to serious infections or even death. Clinicians in Iowa should consider fungal organisms such as histoplasmosis or blastomycosis for patients with compatible signs and symptoms, especially those with compromised immune systems or patients who are not responding to treatment with other medications. It is also important to keep in mind that there is growing resistance among some fungal organisms, especially *Candida auris*, which has been associated with receiving healthcare in other countries and has also been detected in the New York City, New Jersey and Chicago areas. Notably, this organism is sometimes misidentified as other species including *C. haemulonii*, *C. catenulate* or *C. famata*.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/fungal/awareness-week.html.

In the news: Health officials “very worried” as African swine fever spreads in Europe and Asia

www.cnn.com/2018/10/02/health/african-swine-fever-europe-china-spread-intl/index.html

In the news: Walmart is going to use blockchain to stop the spread of *E. coli* and other diseases in lettuce

www.cnn.com/2018/09/24/walmart-is-going-to-use-blockchain-to-stop-the-spread-of-e-coli-in-lettuce.html

Infographic: Protect yourself from itchy rashes





To view in full size, visit www.cdc.gov/fungal/pdf/ringworm-infographic.pdf.

Meeting announcements and training opportunities

None

Have a healthy and happy week!

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